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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 000104

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SUBJECT: SPAIN'S VIEWS IN ADVANCE OF JANUARY 22 GAERC

REF: A. STATE 5256

¶B. STATE 5640  
¶C. MADRID 71

MADRID 00000104 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: ADCM Kathy Fitzpatrick for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (S) SUMMARY: Emboff discussed Spanish views in advance of the January 22 GAERC meeting with Carlos Fernandez-Arias, MFA Subdirector General for the EU, on January 18. Fernandez-Arias highlighted the following areas of special Spanish interest. The EU expects to issue a communique either from the Presidency or the Council of Ministers on the results of the Serbian elections and expressing the EU's hope that the Serbian government will be willing to work together; Spain remains committed to not isolating Serbia over Kosovo. On Iran, Spain supports full implementation of UNSCR 1737 but wishes also to preserve graduation in the sanctions process depending on Iran's response. Lastly, the EU, with Spain's support, will be pushing hard on the Libyan government to release the Bulgarian and Palestinian nurses convicted in the HIV-infection trial, with measures including possibly freezing some diplomatic ties. END SUMMARY.

//Western Balkans//

¶12. (SBU) Fernandez-Arias noted that the results of the Serbian elections should be at least partially known by January 22, and he therefore expects the Council of Ministers to issue a statement on the elections and calling for engagement with the Serbian government. Spain's policy will continue to be encouraging engagement with Serbia in an effort to prevent its radicalization over Kosovo final status.

//Israel-Palestine//

¶13. (SBU) Spain's and the EU's main concern at the moment on Israel-Palestine is the convening of a Quartet meeting as soon as possible. Spain continues to support Abbas and the Temporary International Mechanism.

//Iran//

¶14. (SBU) Fernandez-Arias said that Spain will support implementing UNSCR 1737 with the "broadest possible interpretation." However, he also noted that Spain would not support implementing sanctions outside the mandate of 1737 and that sanctions against Iran should be graduated. He noted that 1737 has a finite time period and the EU should use the sanctions to allow Iran to digest them and possibly respond before moving ahead with more stringent measures. He said that there would be time later for the EU to take unilateral measures if necessary.

15. (S) Per reftel C, during the visit of UNVIE Ambassador Schulte to Madrid, Deputy Foreign Minister Bernardino Leon told Schulte January 10 that Spain would support full implementation of 1737 and would even go beyond it, saying that Spain was actively discouraging Spanish companies from operating in Iran. However, Spanish National Security Advisor Carles Casajuana told Schulte January 11 that Spain would wait until IAEA DG ElBaradei issues his next sixty-day report on Iran (21 February) before considering additional measures outside of 1737. (COMMENT: Casajuana's caution was probably a more accurate reflection of overall GOS policy on the Iranian nuclear issue. END COMMENT.)

//Somalia//

16. (SBU) Spain supports the Transitional Federal Government in Somalia and sees a need to quickly incorporate those Muslim groups which fell outside of the extremist Islamist tribunals. Fernandez-Arias agreed that the Ethiopians should leave as soon as possible. Spain supports the deployment of a Ugandan force, but Fernandez-Arias said Spain probably would not have any money to contribute for this mission.

//Sudan//

17. (SBU) Fernandez-Arias said that Spain agrees on the need for full implementation of the UN SYG's three-phase plan to create a hybrid peacekeeping mission, but he noted that in the meantime the AU mission requires funding. He expressed doubt as to whether the EU had any more funds left available for Darfur at present.

//Libya//

18. (C) Lastly, Fernandez-Arias mentioned that the GAERC would address the matter of the Bulgarian nurses sentenced to death in Libya. He said that he had been following this

MADRID 00000104 002.2 OF 002

issue since it first broke several years ago when he was the North Africa desk officer, and that the case was totally unbelievable. Making reference to Ghaddafi's criticism that Europe is only preoccupied with its citizens and not with the fate of the HIV-infected children, Fernandez-Arias noted that almost all of the children infected in the incident are currently living in Europe along with their families and receiving treatment (including 10 in Spain). He said that the incident was a plain and simple case of corruption in which an official bought tainted blood for a cheaper than market price and pocketed the surplus. Fernandez-Arias said that the Libyans had made scapegoats of the Bulgarian and Palestinian nurses because they thought no one would stick up for them, rather than implicating the many other foreign medical personnel working in the same hospital. He said that Europe does not accept their conviction, does not accept their sentencing to death, has made significant efforts to support the infected children, and is not looking for a tradeoff of any kind. In the past, he said, Spain had merely empathized with and offered moral support to Bulgaria, but now that Bulgaria is an EU member, Spain's "solidarity is total" in this matter. He said that possible measures which would be discussed included the freezing of some European diplomatic ties.

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Aguirre